2016 Annual Communications Committee Report

As was to be presented to delegates at convention by Alison Foxall, Committee Chair

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Infrastructure Improvements

Alison Foxall was appointed as Chair to this committee in August 2015. The last 6 months have largely focused on technology infrastructure. We implemented a NDA Agreement policy prior to the CRM going live officially. The CRM, which is an open source platform called CiviCRM, was migrated from an individual's private server to a new LPF owned server, meanwhile it was also merged with the back-end of our main website at lpf.org, effectively killing off redundancy. We "went live" with the CRM at this point, so new members or volunteers being signed up at lpf.org were automatically entered into the CRM. We also switched payment gateways for donations from YourPatriot to Stripe.

Assigned Budgets

With the new server came a new set of problems. We had no tools to diagnose resource related issues, and the server was crashing often, almost daily. We migrated the site a second time to a platform commonly called AWS, or Amazon Web Services. Alison personally handled the server setup, while Tony Sellers came in after to secure/lock down the server. The server has been stable ever since this second migration.

With the scramble to get the expense approved for the new server in December 2015, it was proposed by the LPF Chair to assign the Communications Committee a budget so that we didn't have to have every little expense approved by the EC. A motion was brought forward to assign us the baseline budget of $1800 per calendar year. An amendment was then brought forward to increase the budget to $2200 per calendar year, incase of any unplanned contingencies. The budget passed, however as it stands, we are on track to have spent $1800 for the year.

Mass Email Distribution

It was intended for our CRM system to be used for mass mailings. It has the capability to hook up to a SMTP mailing server and distribute mass email. However we quickly found out in the late summer of 2015 that this feature inside CiviCRM was underdeveloped and very buggy. We continued on to use a 3rd party email campaign manager, but switched from ReachMail to MailJet, saving us $30/month for essentially the same server (but better). We are now sending email regularly, at least once a month with updates from the party. Our open rate averages 26% among our members.

Controversial Social Media Changes

When Alison took Chair position in August, it was clear to many that the Facebook groups, "Libertarian Party of Florida" and "Libertarian Solutions for Florida" had become cesspools of gossip. Since they were groups that were officially moderated by the party, it was burdensome to read through all the hyperbole on a daily basis. We made motions to effectively kill off and

remove the "Solutions" group, while renaming and transferring ownership to Neal Conner for the other group. The latter motion passed and the group was renamed to "Florida libertarians" and all LPF leadership was removed from administrative roles. The Solutions group motion was amended to transfer ownership to Lynn House as a private entity. This passed. The Communications Committee now maintains the official social media presences on various channels, without attempting to moderate any unofficial group ~~discussions~~ gossip.

Newsletter Reboot
At the 2015 convention, the LPF newsletter was kicked off. For a few months it continued to be maintained by one person. It became a burden and the newsletter fizzled out. Char-Lez Braden led the charge to reboot the newsletter before the 2016 convention. He recruited a new editor– Raquel Okyay– to manage news entries from our members or other non-member libertarians. The new newsletter has been named "The Quill" and was launched 4 weeks ago, with 2 editions already out. To view the newsletter, visit lpf.org/quill and be sure to like the official "The Quill" Facebook Page.

Internal Tools Improvement
Immediately Alison recognized the need for internal tools that did not involve Facebook. We were essentially alienating many members that wanted to be involved but refused to join Facebook out of principle. The LPF had no project management system either. If tasks were assigned, they were quickly forgotten and no one remembered who was working on what or when something was due.

An instant group chat discussion tool was implemented called Slack. You may self invite yourself to be included by going to lpf.org/chat. Slack only requires your email address to join and is not invasive to your privacy. It is also an encrypted platform.

In addition to Slack, the bigger improvement was implementing a real project management solution. We trialed software called Producteev, but it was clunky and not enough API integration support into other platforms. We moved over to Trello, which has seen improvement involvement from committee members.

Looking to the Future
All in all, the past 6 months or so have been a lot of growing pains and much needed internal improvements. One main priority is redesigning the lpf.org website. This endeavour has already begun. We've cleaned up content and dead pages, moved our governing documents and internal documents to docs.lpf.org where ongoing improvements are being made. You can see convention archival documents at this site as well.

We continue to improve our processes and the way we run, and we're looking forward to doing more external outreach rather than internal.